

Continued from Fifth Page.

we put on the steam, the steam makes another jump! I am not a military man, you know. I could be easily puzzled by a dexterous use of the technology of a staff officer. I hear on good authority that several officers of high rank have declined to-day: "The fortifications at Centerville were perfectly impregnable." Impregnable? Good God! What conceivable ideas they must entertain of our gallant soldiers! I have seen Cerro Gordo: the position at Centerville is not so strong—yet we took Cerro Gordo. I have seen Chapultepec: it is five times as formidable—yet we took it. I have seen Narva: the hill is twice as steep, and twice as high; yet 8,000 Swedes, rushing up it, drove 50,000 Russians, under Peter the Great, from their intrenchments. This is supposing, of course, that we should be so obliging as to attack the Rebels just where they could most easily defend, omitting the opportunities of turning their position. But it is useless to talk: I am a civilian. We have escaped a terrible danger and gained a great and a bloodless victory.

CONCLUSIONS.

I do not wish to be understood as blaming any individual. I was most favorably impressed, last Fall, with the bearing of Gen. McClellan, and with his evident success in resolving order out of chaos. I have deprecated the popular impatience with the inaction of the army of the Potomac during the winter, and insisted that the organizing power which had molded a demoralized military mob into obedient capacity for action should be allowed to develop its plan in its own good time, without interference. It is for those in authority to judge where the blame lies. But, using my eyes and my ears—employing (modestly speaking) average powers of deduction—I cannot escape the following conclusions:

First: That the topographical character of the position at Manassas has been wholly misunderstood. Instead of a high plain, with ascending terraces, furnishing concentric lines of defense, it is a low plain, of which the only natural advantage is the stream of Bull Run, with a low bluff bank.

Second: That the position at Centerville, though naturally formidable to an advance from Fairfax, has no flank or rear defenses, is imperfectly fortified, and, from all indications, never had any heavy siege guns.

Third: That the three or four small forts near Manassas Junction, on an open plain, do not constitute a strategic position of any importance.

Fourth: That the strongest of the Rebel works was inferior, both in construction and armament, to the weakest of our forts on the Virginia side of Washington.

Fifth: That the Rebels never had, at any time, in all the camps between Centerville and Manassas, more than 75,000 men.

Sixth: That an advance of our whole army, made any time since the first of November last, would very likely have reached Manassas with as much expedition and as little loss as the advance at this time. It is scarcely likely that the Rebels, who have been, all along, so well informed as to our strength and our contemplated movements, would have hazarded an engagement which must have resulted disastrously to them.

I commenced this under the pines of Camp Dieppontment—I close it at Washington. There are many little incidents of this excursion which I must relate, but enough for to-day. One reflection, however, must be added before I close. The intelligent contraband whom I conversed with at Manassas told me distinctly, in these words: "They said, when they were hurrying off, that you would be here Sunday night." The batteries on the Potomac were vacated in haste, immediately after Gen. Hooker was ordered to cross the river. The press is wisely subjected to censorship, at such a crisis, but the true spies are here in Washington, undetected and untroubled.

N. Y.

How Manassas was Conquered by One Yankee.

From Our Own Correspondent.

WASHINGTON, Thursday, March 13, 1862.

The true history of the conquest of the Rebel strongholds in Virginia has not yet been written. Journals which make conflicting statements as to whether Col. Averill's Pennsylvania Cavalry, or a New Jersey regiment of infantry, is entitled to the honor of being the first to enter the works at Centerville, are apparently ignorant that both were preceded some hours by an advance corps, hailing from a New-England State.

Last Sunday night or Sunday morning a citizen of Massachusetts, a Yankee peddler, some say, whose name is unfortunately not yet in our possession, of roving propensities, and believed to be laboring under the "On to Richmond" hallucination, so odious to all persons in their right mind, was crazy enough to make a forward movement. Our pickets, probably considering it impossible that a monomaniac could convey information to the enemy or in any way prejudice the success of the Union army or rob Gen. McClellan of his well-earned laurels, did not prevent him from pushing beyond our lines. He flanked the Fairfax Court-house works, finding that they had but a single front, took possession of the Court-house and village, where he was welcomed by the strong Union feeling of the remaining inhabitants as a deliverer and regaled with bacon and wretched whisky. On Sunday he marched on toward Centerville, and after a thorough reconnaissance, stormed the Rebel works there, and although there were cannon to the left of him and cannon to the right of him, as well as cannon in front, made a breach large enough to admit the whole body under his command, and took possession and occupied the place on Sunday night, in the name of Yankeeedom, hoisting a rag-flag. Here, too, the people assured him that they had suffered for the Union, and desired to be paid damages. After receiving the congratulations of these oppressed and suffering patriots, the Massachusetts leader turned to contemplate the intrenchments, which he had won by strategy and without the shedding of blood. The enemy had, it appeared, fled in complete panic, carrying their field-pieces with them, but abandoning the heavy artillery, which there was no time to remove. These black cannon were also Union now, and

"Hallelujah with fervid lips."

He contemplated in mute astonishment these sheep in lion's skins, black-muzzled but wooden "quakers," forced into the service of Slavery. But aware that the war was to be "short but desperate," determined to make that "general movement upon the insurgent forces," in conformity with the President's first war order, which, although fixed for February 22, was the first on the Potomac to carry into effect, on Monday morning he pushed on. Crossing Bull Run, pursuing the flying foe across the historic fields of the 21st of July, he approached Manassas, and, without firing a shot, took possession and halted for the night. Satisfied with his achievements, he determined to make no further pursuit, at present, but to rest upon his laurels in Washington as commander-in-chief in rank, if not superior in capacity, had done.

Meantime the Grand Army of the Potomac, of which this advance corps was not a part, having learned from some fugitive slave, who knew no better than to tell the truth to their enemies, who, in the absence of white testimony, hesitated to believe them, had cautiously moved forward. At midnight on Sunday several divisions took up their march toward Manassas. Light cavalry scoured the roads, skirmishes felt the woods, columns of infantry, supported by artillery, marched steadily

forward. In the course of Monday, detachments of the Army of the Potomac reached Fairfax and Centerville. At two o'clock of that day Gen. McClellan parted with his wife, according to the approved Hector and Andromache fashion, and, amid the waving of handkerchiefs from the most highly-born ladies of Washington, attended by more or fewer of his forty-nine aids, and followed by his twenty-six sumptuous baggage-wagons, which have, as two of our oldest, soberest, and most distinguished and influential Senators agree, cost the country \$200,000,000, took the field. On Tuesday he reached Centerville. Then and there the Massachusetts civilian turned over the Rebel strongholds to the four corps d'armée. Should a change be made in the command of the Army of the Potomac, we trust that the unknown Massachusetts man who conquered Manassas, will receive the promotion he deserves. It is not true, as rumored, that his pass has been revoked by Gen. McClellan.

The Evacuation of Manassas, and Stories of the Contrabands.

From Another Correspondent.

HEADQUARTERS OF GEN. HEINTZELMAN, Within two miles of Alexandria, Va., March 12, 8 a.m. When I left Washington, on the afternoon of the 10th, I expected nothing so little as to find myself, two days afterward, stranded in inaction. The city was all astir with excitement and expectation, its streets almost blocked by slowly-moving trains of artillery and departing soldiers, horsemen spurred and splashed hither and thither through its muddy streets; its windows were thronged by spectators. Its Long Bridge was a mere procession of troops and cannon, their faces and muzzles turned steadily and autonomously toward Dixie.

Hurried off by the fever of the occasion, I quitted the capital under an aspect which I shall long remember, and which for excitement and interest could only have been paralleled by the morning of the disastrous day of Bull Run, anticipating a night-drive of twenty or thirty miles in order to overtake the division reportedly assigned to me. I had been told that "Heintzelman's" was moving, and though I might have distrusted the assumed celerity in connection with such a body of men, I floundered and splashed down the dirty mile that lies between Pennsylvania Avenue to the Alexandria Ferry at good speed, arriving just in time to ship myself and horse for the diabolical side of the Potomac, and to be, five minutes afterward, agreeably undeceived as to the necessity of such exertion by a friendly quartermaster.

ALEXANDRIA.

Accordingly, I rode leisurely through that admirable sample of a third-rate Virginia city, Alexandria, which loves the Union no better at this hour than on the morning of Ellsworth's assassination, albeit it is now obliged to mutter its hate covertly, or at most like the superannuated ogre Pope in Pilgrim's Progress, to scowl in impotent defiance at the passer-by. Its streets were in their normal aspect of Spring filth, in its main thoroughfare a great gap of smoldering and smoking ruins indicated the past locality of a batch of its few really handsome stores, and around the Provost's office there clustered a handful of idlers, desperately sympathetic in behalf of a dozen newly-captured Rebels within. Making a slight detour to enjoy the spectacle of the ruined slave-pen of which we have heard so much—where certain of Uncle Sam's blue-coated "Yankees" were gymnastically disposing themselves, and laborers at work tearing down the building (may it prove symbolical of the result of the war!) I gladly left decayed, dingy, and depressing Alexandria behind me, and rode out into the wild country, turning my horse's head in the direction of Fort Lyon and "Heintzelman's."

THE COUNTRY UNDER MILITARY OCCUPATION.

It was sunset, on a moist, dull March day, and a red glare on the western horizon lit up the landscape. Can the readers of THE TRIBUNE imagine the look of a country under military occupation? I will supply a few details.

In the first place all the fences are gone—used up for firewood. Many of the farm-houses ditto—destroyed piece-meal, either for the building of shanties, or bracks or for fuel. Then the crops—all indications of them have disappeared—there is no more "bourne filth and tillage" evident than in Gonzalo's imaginary kingdom in the Tempest. Trees also and brushwood are sparse and scanty, plenty of recently-burnt stumps suggesting the past existence of the former. There is no vegetation, no grass, no very accurately designed roads, only earth, for the most part just emerging from its two months' condition of mud—all intersected, cut up and crossed by innumerable tracks of men, horses and vehicles. Suppose a country so hilly as almost to deserve the title of mountains, with attendant declivities and ravines, a monstrous area of earthwork fortifications, still in progress, named Fort Lyon (after our Missouri hero) upon a breezy elevation, its cannon commanding the vicinity for five or six miles in every direction; add hundreds of white tents most picturesquely situated on the summits and sides of the surrounding hills, and you have the general aspect of my present locality.

"HEINTZELMAN'S."

The Headquarters from which I write, or, at least, a pretentious Virginia house of the modern sort, built of wood, with a piazza in front, marble mantel-pieces in the parlor, and unusually spacious rooms. Constructed for and abandoned by a Virginian of strong Secession sympathies, named Bellenger (now resident in Alexandria), it is, in common with much of the surrounding territory, has passed informally into the possession of our national Uncle, as represented by his loyal soldiers. They have acquired here for some time like twelve months, enduring both the Summer's heat and the Winter's cold, and worse than either, the abominable mud, the epidemically designated the sacred soil of Virginia. Happily, under the blessed influence of sunlight and wind, it is fast disappearing. What it must have amounted to a month ago is fearful to think of. Any number of mud-pyths, inclusive of the old original one added to turning up objectively in the pages of Thomas Carlyle, could certainly have been comfortably accommodated within it.

The two front parlors of our "headquarters" are occupied as offices. That to the left is used by our General (who returned from Washington about an hour after my arrival in camp, with the assurance that we should hardly receive marching orders for a day or two). I write in the other devoted to general official business. It stretches from front to rear, is accommodated with a stove, a rickety desk, a carpet, a map, and a telegraph apparatus, which furnishes a ticking accompaniment to all that is occurring. Out of doors the sun shines gloriously, the morning breeze blows fresh and free over the hill-tops, fluttering our newly-fledged Star-Spangled Banner in front of the door, and affording delicious greeting to the sun-browned cheeks within. A group of officers converse on the piazza, others are busy enough in-doors, horses stand picketed a round, sentries pace to and fro, soldiers come and go, and everything is as cheery as may be—and decidedly unlike an advance. We hear of movements on the part of other divisions, but suppose that the evacuation of Manassas and the falling back of the Rebels for sixty miles to—[has effected a change in the plans of Gen. McClellan, and incidentally in our disposition.]

NEGRO FUGITIVES FROM MANASSAS.

Contrabands and stragglers have been coming in all day yesterday, all confirming the supposed flight which seems less improbable than had been supposed in view of the masterly outflanking process

THE POSITION AT NEW-MADRID.



G. W. WORTH, CHARTERED BY N.Y.

to which the Rebels have yielded.

Doubleless the telegraph has already flashed the general particulars to you, yet the details obtained *en route* may claim some interest. I talked yesterday with half a dozen of these emigrants from Secession, now dispatched to Washington, to repeat what they here volunteered, to the proper authorities.

They were a picturesque group—six sturdy "boys," whose net value may have averaged a thousand dollars each, such as "God's image, carved in ebony," is rated in the rapidly-lessening dominions of Davis. Roughly, but stoutly clad in homespun garments, and with one exception, well shod, the eldest might have been 40 years, the others averaging little more than 30. Thoroughly African in appearance, their black faces and white, glistering teeth the latter irresistibly suggestive of huge, closely-set grains of Indian corn) beamed with satisfaction at the successful result of their flight, as they leaned sunning themselves against the side of the house, answering the questions put to them, and laughing gleefully at the expense of their recent "owners."

When I approached, the elder, a thick-set, heavily-built negro was displaying an old revolver, a "five-shooter" of Colt's pattern, dully capped and loaded, and declaring that he had made up his mind before leaving Manassas to escape or die. He and his party reckoned they had ten shots among 'em. Directly they see how things was a goin', they determined to clear right out, and they done it too. They quit at night, took to the woods, and had to wade Occoquan Creek twice, "up to here"—pointing to the waist. They heard the dogs after 'em, but wasn't afraid of them—not nigger dogs, you know, such as they hunt us with way down South—only sport dogs. They got through the pickets easy—through our pickets, too, they might have added, for we heard nothing of them until they presented themselves at headquarters—knowing the country. He, the principal speaker, quit on Thursday night. Then our side—the Rebels, Sir—was busy leaving; he reckoned they had all gone, now. They was all kinds, Mississippians, Virginians, North Carolinians, and Georgians. They had taken the cannon away, too. Most of 'em was pretty well armed with Enfield rifles or shot-guns, but some had only knives and hickory clubs. An Arkansas company fought only with bowie-knives—"them choppers, you know—they went right in with 'em." They were pretty well clad and fed, had fresh pork and bread, but no coffee for a long time, and no salt. Nearly all of 'em, even the privates, had niggers to wait on 'em—they couldn't get along no how without us. The colored people knew what was goin' on, but they had to keep mighty quiet about it. Everybody said the rebellion was gone up—creaked in, though "the Secesh" thought a good deal of Beauregard and Davis—especially Beauregard. They got news of all the movements of the Union troops, and obtained the Northern papers regularly.

I mentioned the tenor of President Lincoln's recent Emancipation message, and asked whether the speaker thought it probable under any circumstances that the South would attempt the abolition of Slavery. The answer was emphatic: "No, Sir! dey dig us under de ground fast!" There were some black regiments, composed, my informant believed, of free negroes, but not at Manassas; plenty of them down South, guarding the coasts. All the colored folk were for the Union, "of course, Sir; dey believe God's goin' to set 'em free." They had heard of John Brown and of the song about him; he was the bravest man that ever lived.

Humanely apprehensive for the well-being and future prospects of this dusky chattel—who, as he stated, was a Kentuckian born, a Mississippian by compulsory adoption, and, four days ago, a slave of one John Calhoun of Claiborne County, in that repudiatory state—I inquired how he proposed to maintain himself. He smiled—his smile rippled into a grin—and he responded: That he was All Right; that he had raised garden truck, and perfectly understood carpentering. And, really, he seemed quite ready to launch himself upon the untrodden experiment of individual responsibility, on the strength of these ridiculous accomplishments. I wonder if his ex-

master could get along in the world as well, were he cast adrift in a similar manner.

I have seen few pleasanter things than the afternoon sun shone upon immediately subsequent to this conversation: the six escaped slaves set off under escort of a single soldier—not, as an officer humanely explained to them, to prison or punishment, but that they might be fed and cared for, and, after they had retold their story, receive their first visit experience of God's truth—that He created all men free and equal.

Col. Geary's Ten Days' Campaign.

From Another Correspondent.

HILLSDALE, N. Y., March 11, 1862.

I write from a little town buried among the hills of the Shenandoah, midway between Harper's Ferry and Leesburg. I propose to give you the results of Col. Geary's ten days' campaign since he crossed the Potomac, and such of its incidents as have come within my observation or to my knowledge otherwise.

Col. Geary threw his command over the Shenandoah, at Sandy Hook, on Saturday the 1st inst., with the loss of six men killed by drowning, and occupied Lovettsville, ten miles toward Leesburg, the next day. The following week he felt his way, pushing back the enemy's scouts. At length, by a forced march the preceding night, he appeared before Leesburg, at daylight on the morning of the 8th, with the full determination to storm the works there forthwith; but the Rebels had "evacuated" three hours previous.

His trophies, beside occupying the position, were stores to the amount of \$12,000 to \$15,000, 67 prisoners, and 111 horses, with equipments, captured. Among the prisoners are two Colonels and one Lieutenant-Colonel. All these were Rebel scouts, taken by first a surprise, and then a race, in which North ern horse-flesh or Northern forage proved too much every time for even the extraordinary talent for running possessed by the Rebels. This portion of the work was done altogether by Maj. Atwood's Michigan Cavalry, attached to Col. Geary's command. One exploit deserves particular notice. Lieut. R. Z. Phelps, Adjutant of the battalion, while pursuing eleven of the enemy, became detached, with but one man, from the remainder of his party, when the eleven turned and charged upon him. Nothing daunted, he met them half-way, shot one man dead, and was gratified with a splendid rear view of ten horsemen desperately bent on shedding blood with their spurs.

Ball's Bluff, consecrated by Baker's blood, is but 21 miles from Leesburg. Learning that our slaughtered there were not decently interred, Col. Geary rode to the field to-day with a squad of soldiers to give them proper burial. In behalf of THE TRIBUNE I accompanied the party. We found a ghastly spectacle—too horrid for description. The little earth that may have covered the bodies had washed away, leaving them exposed to sight, while unclean birds and beasts were gorging on human flesh, and this at a stone's throw of the dwellings of white people—white outside. Tenderly, but with deep respect for the dead, we buried the bodies in a few cases actually carrying muskets. As near as I can ascertain the disposition made of them by our authorities is—none at all. Two who had just come in I heard charged. They had belonged to the Colonel of a Mississippi regiment, at one time stationed at Leesburg. Here is the gist of the conversation from my memoranda at the time:

"Why did you leave him?"

"Well, sah, but place me thinks me'd stay wid 'im long 'ed go Norf, but me wasn't gwine Souf wid him."

"Didn't he treat you well?"

"No, sah, he was wity hard on us, he treated me

completely too unexpected"—(whatever that may be).

"Well, what did you come here for?"

(Straightening up as though playing a trump card.)

"We're here, sah, to report for work."

"Did you drill and help fight with your master?"

"Dars just whar we and him fall out; he wanted us to fight, and we couldn't bore it."

In my ride to-day from Drainesville, via Leesburg,

to this point, on every hand were evidences of the

late presence of Rebels. Log mud-daubed huts, and

cavalry barracks of substantial make, are still stand-

ing all along the route. These, with numerous forts,

quite elaborate attest two things, that they did not

expect to leave in a hurry, and that negroes may be

of great service to an army, for the testimony is that

this work was all theirs.

In their retreat the Rebels pressed into use negroes

and every description of Rebels. They also marched

off at point of bayonet numbers of Union and

undisciplined men, styling the act "calling out the

militia."

As to the Union sentiment in this vicinity, I am

surprised that it is so considerable and so outspoken.

Louden country must be exceptional or a fair ballot

of the whole South might be trusted to-morrow.

XXXVIII CONGRESS.

FIRST SESSION.

SENATE...WASHINGTON, March 14, 1861.

Mr. HALE (Rep., N. H.), from the Naval Com-

mittee reported the resolution to authorize

the Secretary of the Navy to make equitable

arrangements with contractors for steam machinery,

who have failed to perform their contracts, and to

rent to the Navy.

Mr. WILSON (Rep., Mass.), from the Military

Committee, reported a joint resolution authorizing

the President to assign the command of troops in the

same field or division, without regard to seniority.

It also gives the President power to dismiss any officer

from the service if he sees fit without a court-

martial.

Mr. SHERMAN (Rep., Ohio) objected to the latter

portion, as giving the President too much power.

Mr. HALE (Rep., N. H.) also objected.

The resolution was laid over.

Mr. HALE introduced a bill to authorize the

building of a steam iron-clad ram and steam gun-

boats; also to complete Stevens's battery.

The bill appropriates \$1,000,000 for the ram;

\$120,000 for the gunboats, and \$700,000 for the

completion of Stevens's battery.

The bill was referred.

Mr. HALE (Rep., N. Y.) introduced a bill to com-

pense the property of Rebels. Referred.

On motion of Mr. HARRIS (Rep., Iowa) the bill

to authorize the settlement of claims for certain lands

sold by the United States in the State of Louisiana

was taken up and passed.

Several private bills were then passed.

The case of Mr. Powell was taken up and Mr.

Powell rose to speak in his own defense.

Mr. POWELL (Secession, Ky.) said that he hoped

to treat the subject dispassionately and conscientiously.

He thought his colleague (Davis) had been rather

personal and ungenerous. Courtesy might have led

his colleague to notify him (Powell) that he (Davis)

was going to make a complaint. The resolutions for

his (Powell's) expulsion, it appears were drawn up

in his colleague's handwriting, although they were

presented by the Senator from Minnesota.

He presented by the Senator from Kentucky that if duty

(Powell) gave notice to make any charges against him

ever called him to make any charges against him, the

(Davis), he (Powell) would notify him of the fact,

and do it in his own proper person. His colleague

had said that he (Powell) attended a treasonable

meeting in the County of Owen, and that he (Pow-

ell) knew that Humphrey Marshall was organizing

troops to attack Frankfort. The fact was that he

(Powell) had not been in the County of Owen since

1856, and he had no knowledge that Humphrey Mar-

shall was doing what he (Powell) had charged. Indeed,

he had a letter from Marshall, in which he denies

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